



Town of Wenham

Town Hall
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Selectmen / Town Administrator
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Selectmen
FROM: Peter Lombardi, Town Administrator
RE: Town Administrator's Report
DATE: June 13, 2016

Wenham Pines (Lakeview) Project

Atlantic Tambone will give a brief presentation to the Selectmen at their next meeting on June 28 to review updated project plans for the Wenham Pines development. To date, they have held preliminary meetings with the Conservation Commission, the Affordable Housing Trust, and the Historic District Commission as well as abutters. They now plan to file a formal application with the Planning Board next month, with a public hearing to follow in August. Concurrently, they will file necessary paperwork and be meeting with the Conservation Commission sometime in July. Assuming they receive the necessary approvals, they expect to begin work onsite early next spring.

Community Compact Projects

The Town has formally received \$25,300 in grant funding from the state through the Community Compact program to help move forward on three related projects: we have hired Municipal Resources Inc. to develop a comprehensive and sustainable Capital Improvement Plan; we will offer a mobile application (SeeClickFix) for residents to report complaints/issues and track work orders; we will create an online Visual Budget that gives residents the opportunity to better understand how their tax dollars are spent. We have kick-off meetings with each respective consultant team scheduled in the next several weeks and expect final products to be available this fall.

Essex Street Culvert

The Town has contracted with Unified Contracting out of Everett, the lowest, most responsive and responsible bidder for this project at a base bid cost of \$328,422.00 (about \$20k less than our estimates). With contingencies, police details, and onsite project management engineering services (Weston & Sampson) accounted for, we do not anticipate any cost overruns above the \$500,000 in state funding. The project is set to begin in early July and will be substantially complete by early fall. We anticipate that traffic to be limited to one lane for most of the duration of the project, with more details to be posted on the Town's website after our pre-construction meeting on Wednesday June 15. Representative Brad Hill is also working on scheduling a groundbreaking ceremony with Lieutenant

Governor Polito and MassDOT Highway Administrator Thomas Tinlin to take place in the next few weeks.

Personnel

Having gone through a comprehensive selection process, we have hired Margaret Hoffman as our new Planning Coordinator. Margaret has extensive municipal planning experience, having worked in similar roles in Hanover and Quincy, and is a credentialed AICP planner. She will begin work on Tuesday July 5, with a week or two of overlap while Tony Fields is still here to ensure a smooth transition. My thanks to the representatives from the land use boards, Leo Maestranzi and David Geikie, for their participation and feedback throughout the screening process.

Sean Timmons has decided to stay on as Recreation Director, having initially tendered his resignation last week after receiving a job offer for a similar position in New Hampshire. He will continue to oversee the soon-to-be-completed pool project and to coordinate our extensive summer program offerings. To ensure a continued robust and stable Joint Recreation Department, I would suggest that we engage with Hamilton to review and revise the existing Intermunicipal Agreement to better reflect existing practice and to clarify the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of all parties. In addition, we are still looking to fill a number of seasonal lifeguard positions at both Pleasant Pond and Patton Park.

Traffic Safety on Main Street

At our recent Public Safety Leadership Team meeting, we discussed ongoing issues on Main Street regarding pedestrian and vehicle safety concerns caused by parking on either side of Route 1A in the downtown corridor. The consensus approach from that meeting was to reach out to MassDOT to see if they would be willing to shift the center line toward the NW on Main Street from Arbor Street to Perkins Street. This change would eliminate parking on the NW side of the road and could create sufficient space on the SE side (where the businesses are located) for parking on that shoulder to satisfy minimum AASHTO dimensional requirements.

In this same vein, there has been discussion over the years about the potential of adding a signalized intersection somewhere along Main Street between Cherry Street and Arbor Street to alleviate congestion and reduce traffic hazards along this stretch. While the Town has previously been told that the accident rates do not meet the necessary thresholds to justify the installation of a four-way light, I have asked MassDOT to re-examine their position in light of data provided from the past few years. I have contacted relevant state officials on both points and will report back once I have received a response. Failing MassDOT backing, we may choose to reach out for support from the Metropolitan Planning Organization under their Community Transportation Technical Assistance Program.

Legislative Zoning Reform

In a close vote, the Massachusetts Senate approved legislation last week related to zoning and housing reform that may significantly impact local regulatory processes. Several long-overdue and important elements were included in the bill (developer impact fees,

inclusionary zoning, streamlining small subdivision approvals, etc) as were several changes that could prove very problematic (by-right zoning of both multi-family housing districts and accessory apartments in particular). It is unclear whether the House of Representatives has any interest in taking this up before the end of their session in July. Even if they were to do so and it was approved, a conference committee would be needed to reconcile the differences between the two versions. I plan to attend a regional MAPC meeting this Thursday which will provide greater detail about the specifics of the Senate legislation.